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THE NEW YORK ART CLUB EXHIBITION.

THE New York Art Club, an organization that has been for some time in existence, held its first annual exhibition this season in the Art Gallery on Madison Square. The club is composed almost exclusively of well-known artists, and since its rules permit members to send to its exhibitions any works, whether before exhibited or not, which they deem to be satisfactory indices of their powers, there could be no excuse for a bad show. On that account the fact that the show was a very good one astonished nobody, especially as outsiders were excluded and the abilities of the Club were well known beforehand. When Messrs. Shirlaw, Eaton, Millet, La Farge, Inness, Eastman Johnson, and others of equal standing have matters all their own way—have not to contend with hanging committees, on the one hand, or a crowd of ridiculous aspirants on the other hand, they deserve no thanks for getting up a pretty good exhibition. Yet the exhibition was only pretty good. No one of the painters represented distinguished himself. Many fell below their average. No one, in fact, seemed to take especial interest in the thing.

Among the pictures most deserving of mention, F. D. Millet's little study of sea and shore was noteworthy. This was rather a study than a picture, although the arrangement of tones was evidently composed, not copied exactly from nature. For all that, it was in the matter of tones that the picture was most natural. The lines of the jutting promontory and detached rocks in the middle distance, the sweep of the beach in the foreground, and the curves of the breakers were, doubtless, conscientiously drawn and not wilfully changed in the least, but they were not delicately true. The artist was satisfied with giving a careless report of them. The blue of the sky and that of the water, the brownish pink of the strand, the gray of the rocks, and the fawn color and green of the live and dead patches of grass that covered them were, on the contrary, most carefully reproduced in their exact relations to one another. Even the pinkish light in the sky near the horizon and the apparent reflection in the wet sand—the most open attempt at composition in the thing—was, very likely, suggested by some transient natural effect. The little boat dancing between the shore and the rocks was as exactly right in tone as it would be in a mirror. In Paris, such painting might not be worthy of remark, but in this city it would be wrong not to direct attention to it. Mr. Millet is one of our young men who are really young. He has a future. If he remains as conscientious, as painstaking, as delicate as he now is, there is no telling to what heights he may attain.

Mr. Reinhart's coast scene, equally French, was yet very different. Mr. Reinhart had reached a leading position as a magazine and newspaper illustrator some years ago. Not content with the very good living and the respectable figure he was making, he threw up his engagements and went abroad to study. For a year or more it has seemed as though this was not a sensible move on his part, but it appears that he has finally awakened to the realities of his position, and has devoted himself to earnest work. His contribution gives evidence of a strong and growing talent. Unlike Mr. Millet's work, it shows no appreciation of color; but then we remember that Mr. Reinhart colored very well before he went away. He is now evidently studying other matters, form, values, handling. In these he is making progress; and, since the color gift is born with a man, he is not likely to lose it.

Mr. J. Francis Murphy exhibited "The Bend of a Stream." A little trout brook runs at an angle into the foreground from a point where it is hidden to the eye by the recurving of its course. Near that point stands a group of tall, dark-foliaged trees. Behind them, at a distance from the opposite shore of the brook, is a range of low hills. Above these is a well-conceived sky. With more of nature and more of art this would be a picture to live. The necessary inborn talent is there. Mr. Murphy has certainly made a mistake in exacting a livelihood from his brush, while he is yet a student. He should retire for a while from public view and come forth again when buyers have forgotten that they ever obtained his work for twenty or thirty dollars a canvas.

Of figure-paintings the exhibition had less than a due share. With the exception of Mr. Ward's negroes in a tobacco field, and some studies of heads by Shir-

law, Chase, and Eaton; and the La Farge pictures—early studies, "pot boilers," unfinished and abandoned work, raked up from dingy corners of his studio, yet shaming many more pretentious efforts in the exhibition—there was not much in this line worthy of a second glance. Eastman Johnson's little girl before a red-hot stove served to show how very unlike—we were about to say how inferior—is the handling of even the best artists of the old school to that of even the ordinary artist of the new. Benoni Irwin's portrait of an Irish laborer just missed being good. Mr. Beckwith's masked beauty had a pedagogueish look about her. Mr. Sartain's paintings were such as might have been done in the presence of a "composition class" of young ladies.

To sum up, the Art Club should try hard to do better the next time.

FRENCH PAINTINGS IN NEW YORK.

A NEW YORK newspaper critic thinks that the taste which has been acquired by our picture-buyers for works of the class embraced in the recent Runkle sale will prove to be only transitory. He recalls the vogue that paintings of the Düsseldorf school once had with us, and intimates that the great French romantic school will in a few years be as completely forgotten. Critics who prophesy thus take desperate chances. They would write themselves down ignoramuses if they should maintain that the Düsseldorf professors were as good painters as the great Frenchmen. There are as yet no signs of any better artists arising. They must reckon, therefore, on a debasement of the public taste or a retrograde movement in artistic culture when they say that in a decade of years Corot and Millet and Rousseau will be little thought of. Of course, art has not come to a stand-still with the death of these men. New schools are forming; greater works than theirs, in some respects, will be produced. But it should not be forgotten that to the generation that was at work when we were born was intrusted the task of setting the world to rights again after the upturning of the Revolution, and that they did it pretty well. They were bigger men on the whole than we are likely to be—artists and critics and all.

Those, too, who think that contemporary French art is declining should see some of the new pictures at the dealers'. At Knoedler's, François Flameng's "Moonrise" is an excellent example of what one branch of the new French landscape school is striving for—i.e., the expression of a feeling for nature which Millet would not disown, though it is distinct from his, and also of fresh observations in some respects more fine and accurate than those of the great school which has now become historical—the school of Rousseau, Dupré, Diaz, and the rest of the Barbizon men. Flameng's picture shows the gently rising slope of stubble on which several figures of harvesters—in the middle distance—are binding and throwing down the sheaves to be set into stooks. The full harvest moon is rising a little to the right of the centre of the picture, and, in the top left-hand corner, Venus is shining brightly. The sky is full of light mists still tinged with rose from the sunken sun. At the left of the picture is a fallow field and beyond it some cottages with lights gleaming in the windows and thin pale columns of smoke rising from the chimneys. In management of tones this painting excels most of Millet's work, and the sentiment, though not so strong, is as true and wholesome. At Schaus's, Julien Dupré's splendid picture of a peasant woman conducting an unruly cow to pasture is still on exhibition. In it the landscape, painted entirely without sentiment, is nevertheless a triumph of verifiable reporting of facts, and the same may be said of the figure and the animal. If compared with the little Rousseau at Schaus's, Flameng's work at Knoedler's would seem to lack drawing, and the younger Dupré's to be lacking in brio. The new men are not yet great: they have yet to carve out a lasting fame for themselves, but he would be a rash prophet who should say that they never will.

Of figure painters not universally known here, there are two good examples of Henner among the late arrivals. The one at Schaus's is the principal. The other is at Knoedler's. Both are variations on his usual theme—a beautiful female figure surrounded by masses of dark green foliage through which breaks a blue sky to give warmth to the flesh. At Schaus's also

is a splendidly painted figure of a young girl in a loose red velvet robe by Jacquet. It would not be easy to find a work of the sort by any of the Frenchmen of the last generation which would make this look otherwise than respectable. The big canvas by Delort at Avery's, too, can hardly be said to show a decadence in French art. This, it will be remembered, was illustrated from the artist's sketch in our columns last spring, it having been exhibited at the Salon. It represents a notable incident of the campaign of 1794 when the Dutch fleet, frozen tight in the Texel, was captured by the cavalry of the Republic.

Pictures, new to this city, by Gérôme, Cabanel and Bougereau, now at the same galleries, serve to give point to these considerations, for they are not as good as the pictures before mentioned. If Courbet, Dupré, Rousseau hold their own, it is because they always will. They are men for all time. But some of the new men will ultimately take their places beside them.

SUCH of our readers as may visit Europe this summer are reminded that we have arranged with Mr. Davis, the well-known expert (of 147 New Bond Street, London), to give them, for a modest fee, a professional opinion as to the genuineness of any important work of art that they may think of buying.

My Note Book.



THE result of the movement of the artists and the picture dealers to have foreign works of art imported into this country free of duty was most unexpected. Instead of granting the prayer of the petitioners, Congress, with unexplained perverseness, deliberately increased the ad valorem duty on paintings in oil or water-colors and professional statuary from ten to thirty per cent, and on decorated pottery and porcelain from fifty to sixty per cent. Flat decorated plaques, moreover, which under the old arrangement passed as pictures subject to the ten per cent duty, are now included in the general category of pottery.

UNSATISFACTORY as is this arrangement, I believe that so far as the interests of most of our younger artists are concerned it is infinitely preferable to the Perry Belmont free-trade-in-art bill as it was submitted to them and received their signatures in approval. These gentlemen seem to have followed, like a flock of sheep, the lead of their more famous and prosperous brethren. With a degree of self-denial as magnanimous as it was unanimous, they implored Congress to be so good as to deprive them of their bread and butter. They may thank their stars that Congress did not take them at their word. It is undoubtedly desirable to have free trade in first-class works of art, but it is not desirable to give free entry to the sweepings of the Parisian "Beaux Arts" and "ateliers des dames" with which this country would be flooded by American dealers as soon as the import duty should be removed.

INFERIOR pictures, necessarily, are produced by young painters. They are the apprentice work of embryo artists, and their market value is proportionately low. But inferior as they are, they give the young painter his subsistence while he is fitting himself for better things. Let in, free of duty, however, the higher class of student work of, say, Paris or Munich, and the art student in America would seek in vain for a market for his "pot-boilers." He would find it very difficult to sell a fifty dollar or a hundred dollar picture with such competition. We all know that "pot-boilers" must be produced. They are a necessary evil—very necessary indeed to the producers. But we in America have no interest in increasing the evil by inviting the augmentation of the stock from abroad!

It is urged, I believe, that the great aim of the "free art" movement is to foster American art by the importation, without legislative hindrance, of the best foreign work which shall serve at once as models for our painters and as educators of the public. To this

end, the untrammelled importation of first-class paintings may well be encouraged. But nothing is to be gained by the importation of inferior pictures.

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Now here is a simple way to meet the exigency. Abolish the ad valorem duty altogether, and substitute a uniform tax of, say, one hundred dollars on every oil or water-color painting that comes into the country. This would be almost prohibitory to foreign rubbish, while it would add little to the cost of valuable pictures. Before the convening of the next Congress, there will be ample time for the consideration of this suggestion.

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It is more than probable, by the way, that Mr. Belmont's bill owed its defeat mainly to the too influential backing it received in the signatures of the many wealthy gentlemen who subscribed their names with those of the artists. The average Western Congressman looks upon art only as a wasteful luxury of the rich, and when this petition, signed by a score or so of millionaires, was exhibited by the friends of the bill, its only argument was to confirm him in his peculiar view of the subject. Next time a petition of this sort is sent to Congress, the millionaire connoisseur will see the policy of "taking a back seat."

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THE new act goes into force on the first of July, and our picture dealers are hastily preparing to cross the Atlantic and make their purchases at the opening of the Salon on the first of May. Quite a "boom" in the Paris picture market, especially, may be expected; for it will not be safe to ship purchases to this country later than the tenth of June. It may interest our dealers, by the way, to learn that a French gentleman in this city, who has many friends in Paris among the artists, has written to them advising them of the situation and showing them how to profit by the new law.

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THE charming pen-and-ink drawing by C. G. Bush on another page of this number is reproduced, by the courtesy of Mrs. N. Sarony, from a handsome album presented to her by the members of the Kit-Kat Club, of which her husband is president. Will the artist allow me to suggest that the composition is well suited for a water-color work? The Japanese umbrella would make a charming point of color. Mr. Bush's contribution is the only one in the album in pen-and-ink. C. Y. Turner has a child's head, C. Graham a landscape with water, L. W. Seavey a view among the Thousand Islands, W. H. Lippincott a picturesque head of a German girl of the sixteenth century, J. W. Rough a sketch of High Bridge, Hamilton Hamilton a view of Rockaway, Harry Thomas a landscape—a clever bit of wash—Thulstrup a Swedish peasant girl, C. M. McIlhenney a marine view, J. Dabour a bit of German mediæval costume, M. Angelo Woolf a capital study of a long-shoreman with a short pipe and a broken nose, Percy Moran a slight sketch of apple-trees, Leon Moran a delicate little study of a boy in costume priming a pistol, and W. H. Crane a clever piece of still-life done in gouache. With the exception of the last named, if I remember aright, these water-colors are all in aquarelle.

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THE rejection of the claims for membership of those very clever artists, Percy and Leon Moran, by the American Water-Color Society, based, as I understand, on the score of their youth, strikes an outsider as unjust.

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THE usual mystery as to the identity of certain purchasers of pictures was not lacking to lend its interest to the recent Runkle sale at Chickering Hall. The Rousseau, the Munkaczky, the Daubigny, "Twilight on the River," and the Dupré marine were knocked down to Mr. Frank T. Robinson; but it was understood that he was buying for friends. Thompson, a truckman, made some important purchases for unknown buyers; and the dealers as usual carried off some of the best pictures, either on orders or on speculation. Avery bought Millet's "Drying Clothes," Knoedler the sweet little "River Scene" by Corôt, and Schaus "Cupid's Flight" by Diaz. "Gathering Fagots," by Diaz, went to Robert F. Clark, who also bought Van Marcke's large cattle piece, "Coming Home." Mr. Van Valkenburg was the purchaser of the Deltaille, and H. T. Chapman Jr., of the Gérôme. Jacob H. Schiff bought "The First Love Letter" by Knaus and "The Exile" by Max. The Isabey, Braith's "Bavarian Sheep" and Defregger's "Girl of the Tyrol" went to Henry Clews; Goubie's "Waiting at the Gate" to John A.

Garland; Dupré's "The Oak by the River," Diaz's "Flowers," Jacque's "Moonlight" and "Shepherdess and Sheep" and Pasini's "Crossing the Desert" to H. M. Johnston. The Bouguereau and Cedeström's "The Comic Paper" were knocked down to Edward Chapin, and Aaron J. Healey bought Daubigny's "Evening," Troyon's "Sheep in Pasture," and Knaus' "Ready for Bed." Mr. Avery's handsome wide-margined, illustrated catalogue of the sale, with its many careful etchings by Piton, Ferris, Smillie and others, deserves a passing notice, as being the best ever produced in this country for such a purpose.

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THE Autumn exhibition of pictures in pastel by Chase, Beckwith, Blashfield, Blum and others of the younger school of American artists is looked forward to with much interest. Their works will not by any means be confined to portraits: landscapes, interiors, and genre will all be represented. The other day I found Mr. Blum at work on an extremely clever interior, introducing the nude figure of a model, and was astonished at the luminosity he had produced in the flesh. Persons who suppose only pretty effects are to be got with pastel know little of its resources.

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"THE law's delays" in the matter of Mr. Feuardent's libel suit against Mr. Di Cesnola would be very vexatious to the friends of justice were it not that every month's postponement now strengthens the plaintiff's case by the accession of new testimony confirming his charges of the utter lack of principle of the Director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The latest testimony comes from quite an unexpected source. It is contained in a manuscript which has been sent to this city by the writer, Herr Max Ohnefalsch-Richter, who has lived in Cyprus since 1878, where he has made a specialty of the study of Cypriote antiquities, and where he is employed by Mr. C. T. Newton of the British Museum in making excavations. After saying that in consequence of recent disclosures he wishes to retract openly all that he has written in favor of Louis P. di Cesnola in such publications as the Leipzig Review, "Unsere Zeit," in the Proceedings of the Archæological Institute of Athens, and in The New York Illustrated Christian Weekly of January 11th, 1881, Herr Richter gives a long account of his interviews with Thescharis, a well-known excavator in the island, who used to make extensive sales to Louis di Cesnola by whom he is mentioned in "Cyprus" (see p. 271). Thescharis says that he was much surprised to find among the illustrations in "Cyprus" various gold ornaments represented as whole and intact, which were unearthed as fragments, and in a very bad condition. Other of these ornaments are said in "Cyprus" to belong to the Curium Treasure though they certainly were not found in any one of the four chambers of which a plan is given in "Cyprus," p. 304. In many cases these ornaments were found in tombs, and very often their place of discovery is not known.

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ANOTHER important revelation is made by Herr Richter in relation to the manufacture of "antique" objects. And here it may be said that for dishonest dealing Herr Richter finds Major Alexander Palma di Cesnola a match for his brother Louis. He says that the intendant, buyer of antiques, assistant-restorer, reconstructor and repairer of antiquities employed by Alexander di Cesnola is named Lazari, and that he has demonstrated to him practically, and without disguise, with what skill he can put any "head" whatever on any "body." He can match in size, style and color a body with a head or vice versa, and join the two together in a manner to defy detection, even replacing any large pieces that may be missing. Herr Richter then describes the way in which this Lazari makes the cement he employs, and the manipulation he uses in finishing the work to make it appear old and genuine.

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HE says: "With a powder of terra-cotta ground as fine as that of the object he has to mend, he mixes a remarkable kind of glue which he dissolves before the fire [Lazari had still some of the glue which had been used by Alexander Cesnola]. He makes of the whole a thick paste and applies it to the holes and missing parts; and while this paste is still warm and malleable, he works it up either with his fingers, or a knife or a stick. When the paste is cold and hard he cuts away with a sharp knife the extraneous parts, and fin-

ishes the job by scraping, to give to his patched-up statue a general look of homogeneity. When a statuette is so 'restored,' in many cases the most experienced archæologist will fail to detect what is real from what is false, unless he use a knife to probe it." "I have broken in pieces certain 'antiquities' so made," says Herr Richter, "and found that the genuine fragments were more easy to break than the parts which had been newly made. Lazari has no idea that he is doing anything wrong in acting as he does. On the contrary, he believes that every antiquary and explorer must do the same. But all the Cypriotes and Lazari himself give Louis di Cesnola the credit of being a master repairer. He does his work much better than any of the professionals." Mr. Richter's manuscript is entitled "The Cesnola Affair: An Open Letter to Mr. Clarence Cook."

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THE presentation to the Lotos Club by Hubert Herkomer of his portrait of the president, Whitelaw Reid, was made the occasion of a more than usually good art exhibition last month. The painting of Mr. Reid is certainly one of the artist's most conscientious works; but it was generally admitted that the portrait of Richard Grant White, by J. Alden Weir, which was hung immediately opposite to it, did not by any means suffer by contrast. The hands in the latter picture are particularly well painted.

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EDWARD SANGUINETTI, the New York animal painter, who has been sojourning among the Arabs, making studies, writes to me from Constantine, Algeria, that he is on his way home, with "complete outfits in the way of Arab dresses, bridles and saddles." He should be waylaid and made to contribute his stock toward Mr. Walter Satterlee's studio costume exchange.

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THE following sonnet from the French of Sully-Prudhomme, from the graceful pen of Emma Lazarus, was contributed to The Ephemerion, a wittily-written little journal of a single issue, edited by Mrs. Burton N. Harrison, assisted by such clever literary friends as R. W. Gilder, J. Brander Matthews and Frances Hodgson Burnett:

ART, THE REDEEMER.

If there were nothing blue but sky and sea,
Blond but the wheat-sheaf, roseate but the rose,
No beauty save what senseless nature owes,
Unmixed with bitterness our joy would be.
But with the wave, the heavens, the laughing lea,
Strange forms a melancholy grace disclose,
The charm of eye-beams, smiles and gestures goes,
Woman! too deep within our heart from thee,
We love thee! hence come sorrows without end.
The God, who grace and harmony did blend,
Created love from an unmixed sigh.
But I, in pure art cuirassed, shall behold
Lips, eyes and waving tresses' living gold,
Even as the wheat, the rose, the sea, the sky.

* * *

"IN all the studios here," an American lady writes to me from Paris, "all serious artists study from the nude. Whatever the rest of the world may say, artists themselves know that vitality in art is impossible without it, and that one reason of the mediæval decline into the grotesqueness which art at last reached was the propagation of an asceticism which taught contempt and hatred of the human body in place of the worship which the Greek paid it, and filled the world with monasteries and monks instead of with temples and statues. This is not the place to discuss that burning question, and I will only illustrate it by an incident which proved to forty thoughtful students that all is in habit:

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"ONE day a poor old man, paintable for the shadowy surface of his wrinkled, half-starved body, had been posing all the afternoon as much undressed as if clothes were never known. The pose finished, he retired to the costume-room to clothe himself in his usual rags. While he was thus dressing, an animated critical discussion sprang up among the students concerning the model just studied. Hearing himself thus discussed, and anxious to refute certain statements, the old man calmly walked back into the atelier clad only in one solitary garment, but just that much the more than he had worn all the afternoon. The instant however that he appeared in this deshabelle before the astonished students, such a chorus of offended propriety and indignant reproach burst upon his ears that the poor man very sheepishly withdrew, conscious, if never before, that custom makes insufficient raiment more immodest than none at all!"

MONTEZUMA.